Suspension and Exclusion Policy

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Changes to this Edition

DATE	VERSION	DETAILS OF CHANGES
September 2025	1.0	First Edition – using National College template
September 2026	2.0	Complete review and redevelopment of the policy to align with the St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust Inclusion Framework, Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance. Strengthened focus on lawful, proportionate and equitable decision-making; SEND, safeguarding and Equality Act considerations; preventative measures and graduated response; reintegration following suspension; governance and quality assurance; enhanced parental engagement; and the introduction of Trust decision making frameworks and visual guidance to support consistent practice across all academies.

Statement of intent

St Francis CMAT is committed to creating schools where every child feels safe, valued, respected and that they belong. We believe that positive behaviour is best developed through strong relationships, high expectations, inclusive practice and the graduated response outlined in the Trust's Behaviour Policy. The vast majority of behaviour can be successfully supported through early identification, adaptive practice, reasonable adjustments and partnership with children, families and external agencies.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are measures of last resort. They will only be considered where they are lawful, reasonable, proportionate and necessary to protect the education, safety or welfare of the child concerned or others within the school community. Every decision will be made fairly, consistently and without discrimination, taking full account of the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice and current safeguarding legislation.

The Trust recognises that behaviour may be influenced by a wide range of factors, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), communication needs, social, emotional and mental health needs, trauma, safeguarding concerns, attendance, medical needs and other barriers to learning. Before deciding whether suspension or permanent exclusion is appropriate, leaders will carefully consider the individual circumstances of each child, the support already provided, any reasonable adjustments that have been made and whether further intervention could safely reduce the risk of exclusion.

This policy provides the framework for lawful and equitable decision-making when suspension or permanent exclusion is being considered. It sets out the responsibilities of headteachers, local academy committees, the Trust and local authorities, ensuring that decisions are transparent, evidence-informed and centred on the best interests of children whilst protecting the safety, wellbeing and education of the wider school community. It should be read alongside the Trust's Behaviour Policy, which sets out the Trust's preventative, relational and graduated approach to developing positive behaviour.

Where a suspension does take place, the Trust is committed to ensuring that it forms part of a wider process of support rather than a standalone sanction. Reintegration will be carefully planned, barriers to learning will be reviewed, and schools will work collaboratively with pupils, parents, carers and external agencies to reduce the likelihood of future suspension wherever possible. Where permanent exclusion becomes necessary, decisions will be supported by robust evidence demonstrating that all appropriate and proportionate steps have been considered in accordance with statutory guidance.

For the purposes of this policy:

- A **suspension** is the temporary removal of a pupil from the school for disciplinary reasons. A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year, and the periods of suspension do not have to be consecutive.
- A **permanent exclusion** is the permanent removal of a pupil from the school in response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's Behaviour Policy where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others.

1.0 Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007 • Equality Act 2010
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) (Amendment and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2023
- The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE 'Behaviour in Schools'
- DfE 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE 'Mental health and behaviour in schools' (2018) Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools
- DfE (2026) Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DfE (2026) Working Together to Safeguard Children
- DfE (2024) Creating a School Behaviour Culture: Audit and Action Planning Tools
- DfE 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pupil Code of Conduct
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Equality Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Alternative Provision Policy (where applicable)
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- Anti-bullying Policy

The Trust is committed to fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice. Decisions relating to suspension and permanent exclusion will always consider the individual circumstances of the child, any protected characteristics, disability, special educational needs, safeguarding concerns and the requirement to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate. Decisions will be made lawfully, fairly, consistently and proportionately, balancing the needs of the individual child with the safety, wellbeing and education of the wider school community.

2.0 Roles and responsibilities

The Trust is responsible for:

- Promoting a Trust-wide culture where suspension and permanent exclusion are used lawfully, fairly, consistently and only as measures of last resort.
- Providing strategic oversight and quality assurance of suspension and exclusion practice across all academies.

- Monitoring suspension and permanent exclusion data to identify trends, disproportionality and opportunities to strengthen inclusive practice.
- Supporting headteachers to make evidence-informed decisions that comply with statutory guidance, safeguarding duties and equality legislation.
- Arranging an Independent Review Panel where required following a decision of the Local Academy Committee not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil.
- Ensuring Independent Review Panels are organised in accordance with statutory guidance, including remote access arrangements where appropriate.

The LA is responsible for:

The Local Authority is responsible for fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to suspended and permanently excluded pupils, ensuring that children continue to receive suitable education and that additional statutory responsibilities relating to SEND, safeguarding and looked after children are met. Responsibilities include:

- Having due regard to the relevant statutory guidance when carrying out its duties in relation to the education of LAC.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age excluded permanently, in coordination with the school.
- Reviewing and reassessing pupils' needs in consultation with their parents where they have an EHC plan and are excluded permanently, with a view to identifying a new placement.
- Arranging the hearing without delay at a time, date and venue convenient for all parties.
- Ensuring the independent review panel consists of three or five members as appropriate, which represent the required categories.
- Ensuring all panel members and the clerk have received training within the two years prior to the date of the review.
- If requested by parents, appointing a SEND expert to attend the panel and covering the associated costs of this appointment.

The local academy committee is responsible for:

- Providing effective governance and assurance that suspension and permanent exclusion decisions are lawful, fair, proportionate and consistent with the Trust's values and statutory guidance.
- Seeking assurance that schools have considered reasonable adjustments, safeguarding responsibilities, the graduated response and alternatives to suspension or permanent exclusion where appropriate.
- Reviewing suspension and exclusion information to identify patterns, trends and any disproportionality affecting vulnerable groups.
- Providing information to the Secretary of State, Trust and LA about any suspensions and exclusions within the last 12 months.
- Arranging suitable full-time education for any pupil of compulsory school age who is suspended, where required.
- Considering parents' representations about suspensions and exclusions within 15 school days of receiving notice if the appropriate requirements are met.
- Where a suspension or exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination or test, considering the suspension or exclusion before this date.
- Considering whether it would be appropriate for a pupil to be permitted onto the school premises to sit the public examination or test.
- Arranging the representation meeting at a time and date convenient to all parties, but in compliance with the statutory time limits.
- Arranging for the representation meeting to take place via remote access where requested by parents or excluded pupils aged 18 and over.
- Adhering to its responsibilities to consider the reinstatement of pupils.
- Considering the interests and circumstances of the suspended or excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which they were suspended or excluded, and have due regard to the interests of others at the school.
- Using the civil standard of proof (based on the 'balance of probabilities', it is more than likely that the fact is true) when establishing the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion.

- Ensuring clear minutes are taken of the representation meeting.
- Noting the outcome of the representation meeting on the pupil's education record, along with copies of relevant papers for future reference.
- Notifying the pupil's parents, the headteacher and the LA of its decision and the reasons for it, without delay.
- Appointing a clerk to provide advice to the relevant panel and parties to the review on procedure, law and statutory guidance on suspensions and exclusions.
- Where appropriate, informing parents of where to apply for an independent review panel.
- Informing parents of relevant sources of information.
- Ensuring a pupil's name is removed from the school admissions register, where appropriate.
- Reconvening within 10 school days to reconsider reinstatement of a pupil where directed to do so by the suspensions and exclusions review panel.
- Using suspension, exclusion and reintegration data to evaluate the effectiveness of behaviour systems, early intervention, reasonable adjustments and inclusive practice across the school.

The clerk is responsible for ensuring that review proceedings are administered fairly, lawfully and in accordance with statutory guidance.

- Informing the appropriate individuals that they are entitled to:
    - Make written representations to the panel.
    - Attend the hearing and make oral representations to the panel.
    - Be represented.
- Circulating copies of relevant papers at least five school days before the review to all parties.
- Giving all parties details of those attending and their role, once the position is clear.
- Attending the review and ensuring that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the panel within the timeframe of the policy.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Creating a culture where suspension and permanent exclusion are genuinely measures of last resort through high expectations, inclusive practice and effective implementation of the Trust Behaviour Policy.
- Ensuring behaviour concerns are responded to through a graduated response, taking account of safeguarding, SEND, attendance, wellbeing and other barriers to learning before suspension is considered wherever appropriate.
- Making decisions that are lawful, reasonable, proportionate, equitable and evidence-informed, balancing the needs of the individual child with the safety and wellbeing of the wider school community.
- Ensuring every decision demonstrates due regard to the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice and statutory safeguarding guidance.
- Implementing good levels of discipline to ensure all pupils can benefit from the opportunities provided by education and to minimise potential suspensions and exclusions.
- Applying the civil standard of proof when establishing the facts in relation to a suspension or exclusion.
- Complying with their statutory duties in relation to pupils with SEND when administering the suspension or exclusion process, as outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.
- Considering any contributing factors that are identified after an incident of poor behaviour has occurred,

  e.g. if a pupil has suffered bereavement, experienced bullying or has a mental health issue.
- Considering the use of a multi-agency assessment for a pupil who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour.
- Reviewing repeated suspensions to determine whether current provision is meeting the child's needs, whether additional support is required and whether alternative strategies should be implemented to reduce future suspensions.
- Reviewing whether further assessment, reasonable adjustments, adaptive practice, pastoral intervention, safeguarding support or multi-agency working could safely reduce the risk of suspension or permanent exclusion.

- Engaging effectively with parents in supporting the behaviour of pupils with additional needs.
- Determining whether a pupil will be suspended or excluded on disciplinary grounds.
- Adhering to their responsibilities when cancelling an exclusion before the local academy committee has met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated. Withdrawing any suspensions or exclusions that have not been reviewed by the local academy committee, where appropriate.
- Ensuring any decision to suspend or exclude is lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate.
- Demonstrating how duties under the Equality Act 2010 have been considered, including whether reasonable adjustments have been made and whether disability or SEND has influenced the behaviour under consideration.
- Ensuring they have considered their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home following a suspension or exclusion.
- Making the decision to suspend or exclude based on the evidence available at the time, regardless of any police investigation and/or criminal proceedings.
- Notifying a pupil's parents without delay where the decision is taken to suspend or exclude the pupil, including the days on which the parents must ensure the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours, as well as any other necessary information statutorily required.
- Ensuring that all information provided to parents is clear and easily understood.
- Notifying the governor responsible and LA of their decision to exclude a pupil where appropriate, as well as the pupil's home authority if required.
- Notifying the local academy committee once per term of any exclusions in the headteacher's report to governors.
- Organising suitable work for excluded pupils where alternative provision cannot be arranged.

3.0 Principles for Decision-Making

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious disciplinary measures and will only be used where they are lawful, reasonable, proportionate and necessary. They are measures of last resort and will only be considered where allowing a pupil to remain in school would seriously affect the education, safety or welfare of the pupil

or others within the school community, or where there has been a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the Trust's Behaviour Policy.

Decisions will always be made on an individual basis. The Trust recognises that the same behaviour does not always require the same response. Before deciding whether suspension or permanent exclusion is appropriate, the headteacher will consider the nature and seriousness of the incident alongside the individual circumstances of the pupil and the impact on the wider school community.

Before reaching a decision, the headteacher will consider, where appropriate:

- the seriousness and context of the behaviour
- the age and developmental stage of the pupil
- any special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- whether the pupil has a disability under the Equality Act 2010
- any safeguarding concerns or vulnerabilities
- attendance, wellbeing and any known barriers to learning
- whether reasonable adjustments have been made
- whether appropriate support and graduated responses have been implemented
- whether alternative strategies or interventions could safely reduce the risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- the safety, wellbeing and education of other pupils and staff.

The Trust recognises that behaviour may sometimes indicate unmet educational, developmental, communication, medical, safeguarding or social and emotional needs. Where appropriate, leaders will remain professionally curious and consider whether additional assessment, pastoral support, safeguarding intervention or multi-agency involvement is required alongside any disciplinary response.

The following behaviours may, depending upon the circumstances, warrant suspension or permanent exclusion. This list is not exhaustive and each incident will be considered individually:

- Physical assault against a pupil
- Physical assault against an adult

- Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour towards a pupil or adult
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Discriminatory behaviour, including racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or disability-related abuse
- Possession or use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item
- Serious damage to property
- Behaviour which places the safety of others at significant risk
- Serious or persistent disruption to the education of others.

Pupils may be suspended for one or more fixed periods, up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year. Permanent exclusion may follow a suspension where further evidence emerges or where the circumstances meet the statutory threshold. Every decision will be made in accordance with statutory guidance and the principles set out within this policy.

Before deciding to suspend or permanently exclude, leaders should ask:

- Is this decision lawful?
- Is it reasonable and proportionate?
- Have reasonable adjustments been considered?
- Have safeguarding, SEND and vulnerability been fully explored?
- Have appropriate support and graduated responses been implemented where possible?
- Is suspension or permanent exclusion genuinely the last appropriate option?

4.0 The headteacher's power to suspend and exclude

Only the headteacher has the statutory authority to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil from school. These powers will only be exercised on disciplinary grounds and in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and this policy.

The headteacher will ensure that every decision is lawful, evidence-informed, reasonable, proportionate and equitable, taking full account of the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice

and safeguarding legislation. Decisions will balance the individual circumstances of the pupil with the safety, wellbeing and education of the wider school community.

The headteacher is able to suspend pupils where their behaviour is disruptive during lunchtime. All lunchtime suspensions will be counted as half of a school day. The headteacher is also able to consider a pupil's disruptive behaviour outside of the school premises as grounds for suspension or exclusion, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

When sending a pupil home following any suspension or exclusion, the headteacher will ensure that they exercise their duty of care at all times and will always inform the parents.

Any decision made to suspend or exclude a pupil will be lawful, proportionate and fair, with respect to legislation relating directly to suspensions and exclusions and the school's wider legal duties, including the ECHR. When making decisions, the headteacher will consider whether the pupil has SEND, a disability or any other protected characteristic, whether reasonable adjustments have been implemented, and whether additional support or intervention could safely reduce the likelihood of suspension or permanent exclusion.

The headteacher will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the facts relating to a suspension or exclusion, i.e. that 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true.

The headteacher may cancel any suspension or exclusion that has already begun, or one that has not yet begun; however, this power will only be used if the suspension or exclusion has not already been reviewed by the local academy committee.

Where a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the headteacher will notify the pupil's parents, the local academy committee, the LA, and, where relevant, the virtual school head (VSH) and the pupil's social worker. The notification will also provide the reason for the cancellation. The headteacher will offer the pupil's parents the opportunity to meet with the headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the cancellation of the exclusion, and the pupil will be allowed back into school without delay.

When a suspension or exclusion is cancelled, the local academy committee's duty to consider reinstatement ceases, and there is no requirement to hold a meeting to consider reinstatement.

Any days spent out of school as a result of a suspension or exclusion prior to it being cancelled will count towards the maximum 45 school days that a pupil can be suspended or excluded in an academic year. A permanent exclusion will not be cancelled if the pupil has already been suspended or excluded for more than 45 school days in an academic year or if they will have been so by the time the cancellation takes effect.

The headteacher will report the number of suspensions and exclusions that have been cancelled, alongside the circumstances around and reasons for cancellation, to the local academy committee once per term, to allow the local academy committee to have appropriate oversight.

The headteacher will not issue any 'informal' or 'unofficial' suspensions or exclusions, e.g. sending a pupil home to 'cool off', regardless of whether the parents have agreed to this. The headteacher will not use the threat of suspension or exclusion as a means of instructing parents to remove their child from the premises.

All suspensions and exclusions will be formally recorded on Arbor.

5.0 Factors to consider when suspending or excluding a pupil

When considering the suspension or exclusion of a pupil, the headteacher will:

- Allow the pupil the opportunity to present their case once evidence has been collected.
- Take into account any relevant contextual or contributing factors, including safeguarding concerns, bullying, bereavement, trauma, mental health, attendance, family circumstances or any other factor that may have influenced the behaviour.
- Review whether previous suspensions or disciplinary responses have resulted in sustained behaviour change, whether the pupil is approaching the statutory limit of 45 suspension days in an academic year, and whether further suspension is likely to be effective.
- Consider whether further assessment, early intervention, reasonable adjustments, pastoral support or multi-agency working could safely address the underlying causes of the behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion.

In making any decision, the headteacher will also consider:

- the seriousness of the incident
- the age and developmental stage of the pupil
- the impact of the behaviour on other pupils and staff
- whether reasonable adjustments have been made
- whether the graduated response has been implemented where appropriate
- the views of relevant staff and professionals

- whether the decision is lawful, reasonable, proportionate and equitable.

The headteacher will consider what extra support may be available for vulnerable pupil groups whose suspension and exclusion rates are higher, to reduce their risk of suspension or exclusion, including the following:

- LAC
- Previously Looked After Children
- Pupils eligible for FSM Free School Meals or Pupil Premium
- Pupils with SEND
- Certain ethnic groups
- Children with a social worker
- Young carers
- Children experiencing persistent absence or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)
- Children with identified mental health needs or other recognised vulnerabilities.

The Trust recognises that some groups of pupils are disproportionately represented in suspension and permanent exclusion data nationally. Where a pupil is identified as vulnerable, the headteacher will give careful consideration to the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding legislation and the SEND Code of Practice, ensuring that decisions are based on the individual circumstances of the child rather than membership of any particular group.

Where any member of staff has concerns about vulnerable pupil groups and their behaviour, they will report this to the headteacher, who will instigate a multi-agency assessment to determine whether the behavioural issues might be a result of educational, developmental, communication, safeguarding, mental health or other needs and vulnerabilities. The full assessment procedures are outlined in the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

Where SEND, SEMH or other additional needs are identified, support will be planned and reviewed through the graduated response outlined in the Trust's Behaviour Policy and SEND Policy. This may include reasonable adjustments, adaptive teaching, pastoral intervention, targeted support and involvement from external

agencies where appropriate. Where, despite appropriate support and intervention, the behaviour continues to present a serious risk to the safety, wellbeing or education of the pupil or others, suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered in accordance with statutory guidance. The existence of SEND, SEMH or another vulnerability does not prevent suspension or permanent exclusion where the statutory threshold is met; however, these factors must always be carefully considered when determining whether the decision is lawful, proportionate, equitable and consistent with the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Where a pupil with SEND is permanently excluded, the school will maintain detailed records of the support provided, reasonable adjustments considered, involvement of external agencies, and the rationale for the decision. The school will work collaboratively with the local authority, parents and the receiving provision to support a successful transition.

The headteacher will work in conjunction with the parents of any pupil with additional needs to establish the most effective support mechanisms.

Parents, carers and, where appropriate, the pupil themselves, will be involved as partners in reviewing support, identifying barriers and planning successful reintegration or future provision wherever possible.

6.0 Preventative measures

Before making a final decision to permanently exclude a pupil, the headteacher will consider whether appropriate alternative strategies have been explored and whether there are any reasonable steps that could safely prevent permanent exclusion. This will include consideration of the graduated response, additional support, reasonable adjustments, targeted intervention, alternative provision and partnership working with parents, external agencies and the local authority where appropriate.

Where it is considered to be in the best interests of the pupil and the wider school community, alternative arrangements such as Off-site Direction or a Managed Move may be explored in accordance with statutory guidance. These approaches are intended to provide additional support and should not be viewed as punitive measures.

Off-site direction

Trust may use ~~their~~ it's general powers to arrange for any registered pupil to attend ~~at~~ an alternative setting away from any place outside the school premises for the purpose of receiving educational provision intended to improve their behaviour.

The headteacher will decide, in communication with the pupil and their parents, whether an Off-site Direction is an appropriate solution to manage a pupil's behaviour and avoid suspension or exclusion. Where all parties

agree to this course of action, the school will work with the pupil and their parents to discuss and agree a plan for the placement, including:

- the intended outcomes
- the support to be provided
- review arrangements
- a proposed maximum period of time that the pupil will be at the alternative provision
- the proposed duration of the placement
- and any alternative options that will be considered once the time limit has been reached, e.g. managed moves.
- next steps following review.

The school will notify parents, and the LA if the pupil has an EHC plan, in writing with information about the placement no later than two school days before the relevant day.

The school will keep any Off-site Direction under review. Review meetings will include parents, the pupil where appropriate and any relevant professionals to evaluate progress, review risk, determine whether the placement remains appropriate and plan successful reintegration wherever possible. Where parents request, in writing, that the local academy committee hold a review meeting, the local academy committee will arrange review meetings in response, as soon as is reasonably practicable, unless there has been a review meeting in the previous 10 weeks.

The local academy committee will decide at each review meeting whether the arrangement will continue and for what period of time; the meeting will also decide arrangements for further reviews. Reviews will be recorded in writing, including any decisions made regarding the placement.

Managed moves

Where it is thought to be in a pupil's best interest to transfer them to another mainstream school, the headteacher will discuss this with the parents, and the LA if the pupil has an EHC.

A Managed Move is a voluntary agreement between all parties and will only proceed with the informed consent of parents, the receiving school and the relevant admission authority. Managed Moves will never be used as an alternative to the statutory exclusion process where the legal threshold for permanent exclusion has already been met.

The school will ensure that detailed records are kept of any decision to initiate a managed move, including evidence that appropriate support and intervention has been carried out. The school will participate in information sharing with the pupil's new school, including sending data on prior and current attainment, academic potential and together with safeguarding information, risk assessments, successful strategies, reasonable adjustments and support plans where appropriate. The school will work collaboratively with the receiving school, parents and other professionals to develop an effective transition and reintegration plan that maximises the likelihood of a successful placement.

Parents who have concerns that a managed move is being forced on them or who are unhappy with a managed move will be referred to the Complaints Policy ~~and Procedure~~.

The Trust believes that preventative measures are most effective when they form part of a graduated response rather than being viewed as isolated interventions. Decisions regarding Off-site Direction or Managed Moves will therefore be based on a clear understanding of the barriers affecting the pupil, the support already provided, the intended outcomes of the intervention and the planned review process. The overarching aim will always be to secure the best possible educational outcome whilst maintaining the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all members of the school community.

7.0 Duty to inform parents

Following the headteacher's decision to suspend or exclude a pupil, they will immediately inform the parents, or the excluded pupil if they are 18 or older, in person or by telephone, supported by email communication, of the period of the suspension, or permanency of the exclusion, and the reasons behind this.

Written confirmation will be provided without delay and will include all information required under statutory guidance. The school will ensure that communication with parents is clear, timely, respectful and accessible, recognising that suspension and permanent exclusion can be distressing for children and families.

The headteacher will inform the parents ~~in~~ of the following:

- The reasons for the suspension or exclusion
- The length of the suspension or whether the exclusion is permanent.
- Their right to raise representations about the suspension or exclusion to the local academy committee, including how the pupil will be involved in this and how the representations will be made
- Their right to make a request to hold the meeting via remote access and how this request can be made

- Their right to attend a meeting where there is a legal requirement for the local academy committee to consider the suspension or exclusion, and the fact that they are able to bring an accompanying individual
- The arrangements that have been made for the pupil to continue their education prior to the organisation of any alternative provision, or the pupil's return to school
- Relevant sources of free, impartial information
- The school's arrangements for discussing reintegration and any ongoing support where appropriate.

Where the pupil is of compulsory school age, the headteacher will inform the parents by the end of the afternoon session that for the first five days of the suspension or exclusion (or until the start date of any alternative provision or the end of the suspension, where this is earlier), parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without justification, and that parents may receive a penalty fine if they fail to do so.

Where the headteacher has arranged alternative provision, they will also inform the parents of the following:

- The start and end date for any provision of full-time education
- The address at which the provision will take place
- Any information necessary for the pupil to identify the person they should report to on the starting date

Where the headteacher is unable to provide information on alternative provision by the end of the afternoon session, they will provide the information in a subsequent written notice without further delay, and within 48 hours of the pupil beginning the provision. If the alternative provision is due to begin before the sixth day of the suspension or exclusion, the headteacher is able to give less than 48 hours of notice, with parental consent.

If the headteacher has decided to suspend the pupil for a further fixed period following their original suspension, or to permanently exclude them, they will notify the parents without delay and issue a new suspension or exclusion notice to parents.

8.0 Duty to inform the local academy committee and LA

The headteacher will notify the Trust, the Local Academy Committee and the Local Authority, as required by statutory guidance, of any suspension or permanent exclusion. Notifications will be made without delay and will include the reasons for the decision and the duration of any suspension.

- Any permanent exclusions (including where a suspension is followed by a decision to permanently exclude the pupil)
- Any suspensions which would result in the pupil being suspended for more than 5 school days in a term (or more than 10 lunchtimes)
- Any suspensions or exclusions which would result in the pupil being absent from an examination or national curriculum test

For any suspensions not meeting the above thresholds, other than those above, the headteacher will notify the local academy committee once per term.

The Local Authority will be notified of all suspensions and permanent exclusions, regardless of their duration, in accordance with statutory requirements.

Notifications will include all information required by statutory guidance to enable effective oversight and fulfilment of legal duties.

If a pupil who is suspended or excluded lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the headteacher will notify the pupil's 'home authority'.

Where appropriate, the headteacher will also notify the pupil's social worker and/or the Virtual School Head without delay, in accordance with statutory guidance.

9.0 Duty to inform social workers and the virtual school head (VSH)

When a pupil has been suspended or excluded, the headteacher will, without delay, notify the pupil's social worker, if they have one, and the VSH, if they are a looked-after child. This notification will include the period of any suspension and the reasons for suspension or permanent exclusion.

The Trust recognises the important role that social workers and Virtual School Heads play in promoting educational stability and safeguarding vulnerable children. Wherever appropriate, they will be involved at the earliest opportunity to support planning, decision-making and successful reintegration.

Social workers and/or the VSH will also be informed when a meeting of the local academy committee is taking place, and will be invited to attend the meeting should they wish to do so.

Social workers and VSHs will be allowed to join a local academy committee meeting or independent review panel via ~~the use of~~ remote access, where this is permitted within statutory guidance and enables them to participate fully and effectively in the proceedings.

Where a pupil has a social worker, is looked after or has previously been looked after, the school will work collaboratively with all relevant professionals to minimise disruption to the pupil's education and promote positive outcomes.

10.0 Arranging education for suspended and excluded pupils

Where a pupil is suspended for more than five consecutive school days, suitable full-time education will be arranged to begin no later than the sixth school day of the suspension, in accordance with statutory guidance.

Where a pupil receives consecutive suspensions, these will be regarded as cumulative, and full-time education will still have to be provided from the sixth day of suspension.

Where a pupil is permanently excluded, suitable full-time education will be arranged from the sixth school day following the exclusion. Trust and school will not arrange full-time education for any pupil who is currently in their final year of compulsory education, and who does not have any further public examinations to sit.

The Trust recognises that prolonged absence from education can have a significant impact on learning, wellbeing and future outcomes. Wherever possible, alternative provision will therefore be arranged at the earliest opportunity, rather than waiting until the statutory sixth day. Where it is not possible to arrange alternative provision during the first five days, the school will ensure that ~~they~~ reasonable steps are taken reasonable steps to set and mark work for the pupil.

If a pupil with SEND has been suspended or excluded, the school will ensure that:

- Any alternative provision is arranged in consultation with the pupil's parents, who are able to request preferences.
- When identifying alternative provision, any EHC plan is reviewed or the pupil's needs are reassessed, in consultation with the pupil's parents.
- Reasonable adjustments continue to be considered within any alternative provision.
- The alternative provision is capable of meeting the pupil's identified needs and supporting continued progress wherever possible.

Where appropriate, the school will work collaboratively with parents, the Local Authority, alternative providers and other agencies to plan the pupil's education, monitor progress and support successful reintegration or transition to future provision.

11.0 Reintegration following suspension

Statement of intent

The Trust believes that the purpose of a suspension is to provide an opportunity for reflection, planning and support that enables a safe and successful return to school. Reintegration is an essential part of the graduated response and should strengthen the pupil's engagement with learning, reduce the likelihood of repeat suspensions and support positive relationships.

Every suspension should result in meaningful review, not simply a return to normal practice.

Reintegration planning

Following every suspension, the school will:

- Arrange a reintegration meeting with the pupil and parents before, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, the pupil returns to school.
- Review the incident leading to the suspension.
- Identify any underlying barriers to learning, behaviour or participation.
- Review safeguarding information and any emerging concerns.
- Consider whether further assessment or referrals are required.
- Review whether reasonable adjustments remain appropriate.
- Agree any additional support required.
- Confirm clear expectations and success measures.

Reintegration should consider

Where appropriate, reintegration planning will include consideration of:

- SEND
- Communication needs
- Mental health and wellbeing

- Trauma or adverse childhood experiences
- Attendance
- Family circumstances
- Peer relationships
- Bullying
- Safeguarding concerns
- Medical needs
- Pupil voice.

Graduated response

Where a pupil has received repeated suspensions, the school will review whether the current graduated response remains appropriate.

This may include:

- review of support plans
- review of reasonable adjustments
- additional assessment
- behaviour support
- pastoral intervention
- multi-agency working
- alternative provision
- review of EHCP provision
- emergency annual review where appropriate.

Reintegration meeting

The reintegration meeting should:

- welcome the pupil back positively

- restore relationships
- review learning missed
- discuss support required
- identify any reasonable adjustments
- agree expectations
- agree monitoring arrangements
- identify an adult the pupil can access if required.

The meeting should focus on repairing relationships, strengthening belonging and enabling the pupil to experience success on their return to school.

Monitoring

Following reintegration, the school will:

- monitor attendance
- monitor behaviour
- review academic engagement
- review wellbeing
- review support arrangements
- evaluate the effectiveness of any interventions.

Where concerns continue, the school will review the graduated response and consider whether additional support or alternative strategies are required.

Every suspension should provide an opportunity for learning for both the pupil and the school. Leaders will use reintegration meetings, behaviour analysis and pupil voice to evaluate whether additional support, adaptations or changes to practice could reduce the likelihood of future suspensions and strengthen inclusive practice across the Trust.

12.0 Considering suspensions and exclusions

The local academy committee will consider any representations made by parents regarding suspensions and exclusions.

Parents and, where requested, a friend or representative, the headteacher, and a member of the LA will be invited to attend any consideration of suspensions and exclusions and will be able to make representations.

The Local Academy Committee will ensure that all parties are treated fairly and respectfully throughout the process and that decisions are made impartially, based upon the available evidence and in accordance with statutory guidance.

Any meeting to consider reinstatement of a pupil will be arranged at a date and time convenient for all parties, and in compliance with any statutory time limits. Parents, and excluded pupils if they are over 18, will also be able to request that the meeting is held via remote access.

Where it is appropriate to the pupil's age and level of understanding, the pupil will also attend any consideration meeting, and will be enabled to make a representation on their own behalf if they desire to do so.

The local academy committee will consider the reinstatement of a suspended or excluded pupil, where:

- The exclusion is permanent.
- The suspension is fixed-period, and would bring the pupil's total number of suspended school days to more than 15 in any given term.
- The suspension or exclusion would result in the pupil missing a public examination.

In the case of a suspension where the pupil's total number of suspended days is more than 5 but less than 16 school days (this includes suspensions that exceed 15 school days by less than a whole day, e.g. one that totals 15.5 days) within a term, if parents make representations, the local academy committee will consider suspensions within 50 school days of receiving the notice of suspension. In the absence of any representations from parents, the local academy committee will consider the reinstatement on their own.

Where a suspension will take a pupil's total number of school days out of school above five but less than 15 for the term, and parents have not requested a local academy committee meeting, the local academy committee will not be required to consider the pupil's reinstatement but it will have the power to do so if it deems it appropriate.

Where a suspension will not bring a pupil's total number of days of suspension or permanent exclusion to more than five days in a term, the local academy committee will consider all representations made by parents; however, the board cannot direct the reinstatement of the pupil and it is not required to arrange a meeting with parents.

Where suspension or exclusion would result in a pupil missing a public examination, the local academy committee will consider the suspension or exclusion before the test to decide whether the pupil should be reinstated in time to take the examination.

If it is not practicable for a sufficient number of governors to consider the decision before the examination, a smaller sub-committee will consider the suspension or exclusion and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

In light of the above, the local academy committee will also consider whether it would be appropriate to allow the suspended or excluded pupil to enter the premises to take the examination.

When considering the reinstatement of a pupil, the local academy committee will:

- Only discuss the suspension or exclusion with the parties present at the meeting.
- Ask for any written evidence prior to the meeting.
- Circulate any written evidence and information to all parties, at least five school days in advance of the meeting.
- Allow pupils and parents to be accompanied by a person of their choice to the meeting.
- Consider what reasonable adjustments need to be made to support the attendance and contribution of parties at the meeting.
- Identify the steps needed to enable and encourage the suspended or excluded pupil to attend the meeting and speak on their behalf, or how they may contribute personal views by other means if attendance is not possible.
- Consider the interests and circumstances of the pupil, the impact of the behaviour on the wider school community, the evidence presented, the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and whether the headteacher's decision was lawful, reasonable, proportionate and procedurally fair.

13.0 Reaching a decision

After considering suspensions and exclusions, the local academy committee will either:

- Decline to reinstate the pupil.
- Direct the reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a specified date.

If reinstatement would make no practical difference, e.g. if the pupil has already returned to school following a suspension or the parents make clear they do not want their child reinstated, the local academy committee will still consider whether the pupil should be officially reinstated, and whether the headteacher's decision to suspend or exclude the pupil was lawful, reasonable, proportionate and procedurally fair, based on the evidence presented.

The local academy committee will apply the civil standard of proof when responding to the acts relating to a suspension or exclusion, i.e. that on the 'balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that the facts are true. To reach a decision, the local academy committee will:

- Identify the steps they intend to take to ensure that all parties involved will have the opportunity to participate and present their views.
- Ensure that minutes are taken of the meeting as a record of the evidence that was considered.
- Ask all parties to withdraw from the meeting before concluding their decision.
- Consider whether the suspension or exclusion was lawful, reasonable, proportionate, equitable and consistent with the Trust's duties under the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice and statutory guidance.
- Record the outcome of the decision on the pupil's educational records, along with copies, which will be kept for at least six months.
- Make a note of their findings, where they have considered a suspension or exclusion but cannot reinstate the pupil.

14.0 Notification of considered suspensions and exclusions

The local academy committee will notify the parents of the suspended or excluded pupil, the headteacher, and the LA of their decision following the consideration of a suspension or exclusion, in writing and without delay.

Written notification will clearly explain the decision reached, the reasons for that decision and any rights of review or appeal available to parents.

In the case of exclusion, where the local academy committee decides not to reinstate the pupil, they will notify the parents:

- That the exclusion is permanent.
- Of their right for it to be reviewed by an independent review panel.
- Of the date by which an application for review must be made.
- Of the name and address of whom the review application should be submitted to.
- That a request to hold the meeting via remote access can be made and how to do this.
- That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, this should include reference to how a pupil's SEND is considered relevant to the exclusion.
- That, regardless of whether a pupil has been identified as having SEND, the parents have a right to require the local academy committee to ensure a SEND expert attends the review.
- Of the role of the SEND expert that will attend the review, and that the parents will not be charged for this.
- That they are required to make it clear if they wish for a SEND expert to attend the review.
- That they may appoint someone at their own expense to make representations to the panel.

The local academy committee will also notify parents that, if they believe a suspension or exclusion has been issued as a result of discrimination, then they are required to make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), and that this should be within six months of when the discrimination allegedly took place.

After any conclusion, the local academy committee will notify the parents, and all other parties involved, of the decision that was made and the reasoning for this, in sufficient detail.

15.0 Removing excluded pupils from the school register

The headteacher will remove pupils from the school register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the local academy committee's decision not to reinstate the pupil and no application for an independent panel review has been received.
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent panel review following an exclusion.

If an application for an independent panel review has been made within 15 school days, the headteacher will wait until the review has been determined, or abandoned, and until the local academy committee has completed any reconsideration that the panel recommended or directed it to carry out, before removing the pupil from the school register.

If a pupil's name is to be removed from the register, the headteacher will make a return to the LA, which will include:

- All the particulars which were entered in the register.
- The address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides.
- The grounds upon which the pupil's name is to be removed from the register.

Any return to the LA will be made as soon as the grounds for removal are met and no later than the date in which the pupil's name was removed.

If a pupil's name has been removed from the register and a discrimination claim is made, the pupil may be reinstated following a decision made by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) or County Court.

Whilst a pupil's name remains on the admissions register, the appropriate code will be used to mark the pupil's attendance:

- Code B: Education off-site
- Code D: Dual registration
- Code E: Absent and not attending alternative provision

16.0 Independent review panel

The Trust will ensure that all Independent Review Panels are conducted in accordance with statutory guidance and principles of procedural fairness, independence and transparency.

The Trust will constitute an independent review panel of three or five members that represent the following categories:

- A lay member to chair the panel. This individual will not have worked in any school in a paid capacity
- A current or former school governor who has served for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years

- A headteacher or individual who has been a headteacher within the last 5 years

Parents are required to submit their applications within:

- 15 school days of the local academy committee's notification of their decision.
- 15 school days of the final determination of a discriminatory claim made under the Equality Act 2010.

Any application made outside of the above timeframe will not be reviewed. Parents are able to request an independent panel review even if they did not make a case to, or attend, the local academy committee's initial consideration of the exclusion.

Parents can request that independent review panels take place via remote access.

The Trust will adhere to all statutory guidelines when conducting an independent panel review, as outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance.

17.0 Appointing a SEND expert

If requested by parents in their application for an independent review panel, the Trust will appoint a SEND expert to attend the panel and covers the associated costs of this appointment. Parents have a right to request the attendance of a SEND expert at a review, regardless of whether the school recognises that their child has SEND.

The Trust will make arrangements to indemnify the SEND expert against any legal costs and expenses reasonably incurred as a result of any decisions or actions connected to the review and which are taken in good faith.

An individual will not serve as a SEND expert if they have, or at any time have had, any connection with the Trust, school, parents or pupil, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their ability to act impartially; however, an individual is not taken to have such a connection solely because they are an employee of the Trust.

The SEND expert will be a professional with first-hand experience of the assessment and support of SEND, as well as an understanding of the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEND. Examples of suitable individuals include educational psychologists, specialist SEND teachers, SENCOs and behaviour support teachers.

Recently retired individuals are not precluded from fulfilling this role; however, during interview, the Trust will assess the knowledge of such individuals in order to ensure that they have a good understanding of current practice and the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEND.

Whilst individuals are not automatically taken to be partial simply because they are an employee of, or contracted by, the Trust, they will not have had any previous involvement in the assessment or support of SEND for the excluded pupil, or siblings of the excluded pupil. The Trust will request that prospective SEND experts declare any conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity.

The Trust will take reasonable steps to appoint an appropriately qualified and impartial SEND expert who commands the confidence of all parties wherever possible.

The Trust will determine the amount of any payment in relation to the appointment of the SEND expert, such as financial loss, travel and subsistence allowances.

18.0 The role of the SEND expert

The SEND expert provides impartial advice to the Independent Review Panel regarding the relevance of SEND to the exclusion decision. Their role is similar to that of an expert witness; however, they do not determine the outcome of the review or reassess the pupil's SEND.

The focus of the SEND expert's advice will be on whether the school's policies which relate to SEND, or the application of these policies in relation to the excluded pupil, were legal, reasonable and procedurally fair. If the SEND expert believes that this was not the case, they will, where possible, advise the panel on the possible contribution this could have made to the circumstances of the pupil's exclusion.

Where the school does not recognise that a pupil has SEND, the SEND expert will advise the panel on whether they believe the school acted in a legal, reasonable and procedurally fair way with respect to the identification of any SEND that the pupil may potentially have, and any contribution that this could have made to the circumstances of the pupil's exclusion.

The SEND expert will not criticise a school's policies or actions simply because they believe a different approach should have been followed or because another school might have taken a different approach.

19.0 Appointing a clerk

The Trust will decide whether to appoint a clerk to the independent review panel, or to make alternative arrangements to administer the panel.

Where a clerk is appointed, the Trust will ensure that the clerk did not serve as clerk to the local academy committee when the decision was made not to reinstate the pupil.

20.0 The role of the clerk

The clerk is responsible for ensuring that the Independent Review Panel is administered fairly, lawfully and in accordance with statutory guidance. The clerk will provide procedural advice to the panel and all parties throughout the review process.

The clerk will:

- Identify, in advance of the meeting, whether the excluded pupil wishes to attend the panel hearing, taking reasonable steps to enable the pupil to feedback their views, irrespective of their attendance.
- Identify, in advance of the meeting, whether any alleged victims of the incident leading up to the exclusion wish to attend the panel hearing, taking reasonable steps to enable them to feedback their views, irrespective of their attendance.
- Ensure that the panel is able to hear from any witnesses to the incident leading to the exclusion, taking into account the fact that some of these people may be pupils at the school. Pupils under 18 will not be allowed to appear in person without parental consent.
- Inform the parents, headteacher and local academy committee that they are entitled to make oral and written representations to the panel, attend the hearing, and be represented.
- Ensure that all parties are:
  - Provided with copies of relevant papers at least five school days before the review, notifying the panel if any requested documents have not been provided in case the panel wishes to adjourn until a later date.
  - Informed about who is attending the meeting, and what their roles are.
- Attend the review and ensure that minutes are produced in accordance with instructions from the independent review panel.

Where a clerk is not appointed, the LA will undertake the functions outlined above.

21.0 The duties of the independent review panel

The role of the Independent Review Panel is to review the decision of the Local Academy Committee not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil in accordance with statutory guidance.

In reviewing the decision, the panel will consider the interests and circumstances of the excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which the pupil was excluded, and have regard to the interests of other pupils

and people working at the school. The panel will apply the civil standard of proof, determining whether, on the balance of probabilities, the facts are more likely than not to be true.

Following the review, the panel will do one of the following:

- Uphold the decision
- Recommend that the local academy committee reconsiders reinstatement
- Quash the decision and direct that the local academy committee reconsiders reinstatement

The panel's decision does not have to be unanimous and can be decided by a majority vote. It is binding on the pupil, parents, local academy committee, headteacher and LA.

22.0 Conducting local academy committee meetings or independent review panels via remote access

Parents, or excluded pupils if they are 18 or older, will be able to request that local academy committee meetings or independent review panels are held via remote access; however, parents and pupils will be made aware that this is not the default option.

Remote participation should not disadvantage any participant. Meetings will only proceed where all parties can participate fully, hear and be heard throughout the proceedings and where the integrity, fairness and transparency of the process can be maintained.

Where a parent or pupil makes a request correctly in line with instructions set out in the headteacher's or local academy committee's written notification, the local academy committee or LA will hold the meeting via the use of remote access.

Remote meetings and panels will be held in accordance with timelines for face-to-face meetings.

Where a request for a meeting to be held via remote access is not made, or the parent or pupil does not state a preference, the meeting or panel will be held in person unless it is not practicable to do so.

If there is a reason related to extraordinary events or unforeseen circumstances, e.g. an outbreak of an infectious illness, which means it is not reasonable for a meeting or panel to be held in person, it may be held via remote access.

Meetings will only be held via remote access if the local academy committee or LA is satisfied that that the meeting can be held fairly and transparently. If this cannot be done, the local academy committee or LA will

consult with the parent to discuss how a face-to-face meeting can be arranged that will be convenient for them.

If there are technological or internet issues during a remote meeting which compromises the ability for participants to be seen or heard or prevents the meeting from being held fairly and transparently and it is not reasonably practicable to resolve, a face-to-face meeting will be arranged without delay.

When holding meetings or panels via remote access, the local academy committee or LA will:

- Comply with relevant equalities legislation.
- Enable access to support which the parent is entitled to, including the presence of a friend.
- Confirm with all participants that they have access to the technology that will allow them to participate in the meeting or panel.
- Ensure all the participants will be able to put across their point of view and/or fulfil their function.
- Ensure the remote meeting or panel can be held fairly and transparently.

Where a suspension or exclusion began before 1 September 2023 and a local academy committee meeting has not yet been held, the headteacher will notify the parent, either on 1 September or as soon as possible afterwards, that they can ask the local academy committee to hold the meeting via the use of remote access. This also applies if an exclusion began before 1 September and the parent is entitled to make representations but has not yet done so. The headteacher's notification will explain how requests must be made and to whom and that requests must be made within three school days of the notification.

Where an exclusion began before 1 September 2023 and an independent review panel has not yet been held, the local academy committee must notify the parent, either on 1 September or as soon as possible that they can ask the independent review panel to hold the meeting via the use of remote access. This also applies if an exclusion began before 1 September and the parent is entitled to apply for an independent review panel but has not yet done so. The notification will explain how requests must be made and to whom and that requests must be made within three school days of the notification.

23.0 Reconsidering reinstatement following a review

Where the independent review panel **instructs** the local academy committee to reconsider their decision not to reinstate a pupil, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision.

Where an Independent Review Panel directs or recommends reconsideration, the Local Academy Committee will reconsider the decision within the statutory timescale and provide clear reasons for any subsequent decision.

Where the independent review panel **recommends** that the local academy committee should reconsider their decision not to reinstate a pupil, they will do so within 10 school days of being given notice of the review panel's decision. The school is aware that if, following a recommendation to reconsider, the local academy committee does not offer to reinstate the pupil, it will not be subject to a financial adjustment. If, following reconsideration, the local academy committee offers to reinstate the pupil but the parents decline, no adjustment will be made to the school's budget.

Following reconsideration, the local academy committee will notify the parents, headteacher and LA of their reconsidered decision and the reasons for this.

24.0 Criminal investigations

The headteacher will not postpone taking a decision to suspend or exclude a pupil due to a police investigation being underway, or any criminal proceedings that are in place.

Where a police investigation is ongoing, the headteacher will make decisions based upon the evidence available at the time, applying the civil standard of proof whilst taking appropriate account of any limitations on the available evidence.

If the local academy committee is required to consider the headteacher's decision in these circumstances, they will not postpone the meeting and will make a decision based on the evidence available.

25.0 Training requirements

The Trust and Local Authority will ensure that all individuals involved in suspension and permanent exclusion processes receive appropriate training in accordance with statutory guidance. Training will cover:

- The requirements of the legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing suspensions and exclusions.
- The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice.
- The role of the chair of a review panel. • The role of the clerk to a review panel.
- The duties of headteachers, local academy committees and the panel under the Equality Act 2010.

- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act.
- The Trust's expectations regarding equitable decision-making, inclusion, safeguarding and reasonable adjustments.

Clerks will also have an up-to-date understanding on developments in case law which are relevant to suspension and exclusion.

26.0 Using data

The Trust will regularly monitor suspension and permanent exclusion data to evaluate the effectiveness, consistency and equity of behaviour and inclusion practice across all academies.

- Consider the level of pupil moves and the characteristics of pupils who are moving on any permanent exclusions to ensure that this is only being used as a last resort.
- Gather information on pupils who are taken off the roll and those who are on the roll but attending education off-site.
- Determine whether there are any patterns of suspensions and exclusions across the trust. Identify patterns, trends and disproportionality across the Trust.
- Consider the effectiveness and consistency in implementing the Behaviour Policy.
- Understand any variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions to ensure they are only used when necessary.
- Evaluate outcomes for vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, looked after children, previously looked after children and other protected groups.
- Gather information on where pupils are receiving repeat suspensions.
- Evaluate the impact of early intervention, adaptive practice, reasonable adjustments and graduated responses in reducing repeat suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- Analysing whether the placements of pupils directed off-site into alternative provision are reviewed at sufficient intervals to assure that the education is achieving its objectives.

27.0 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Trust. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2027**.

All members of staff will be required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

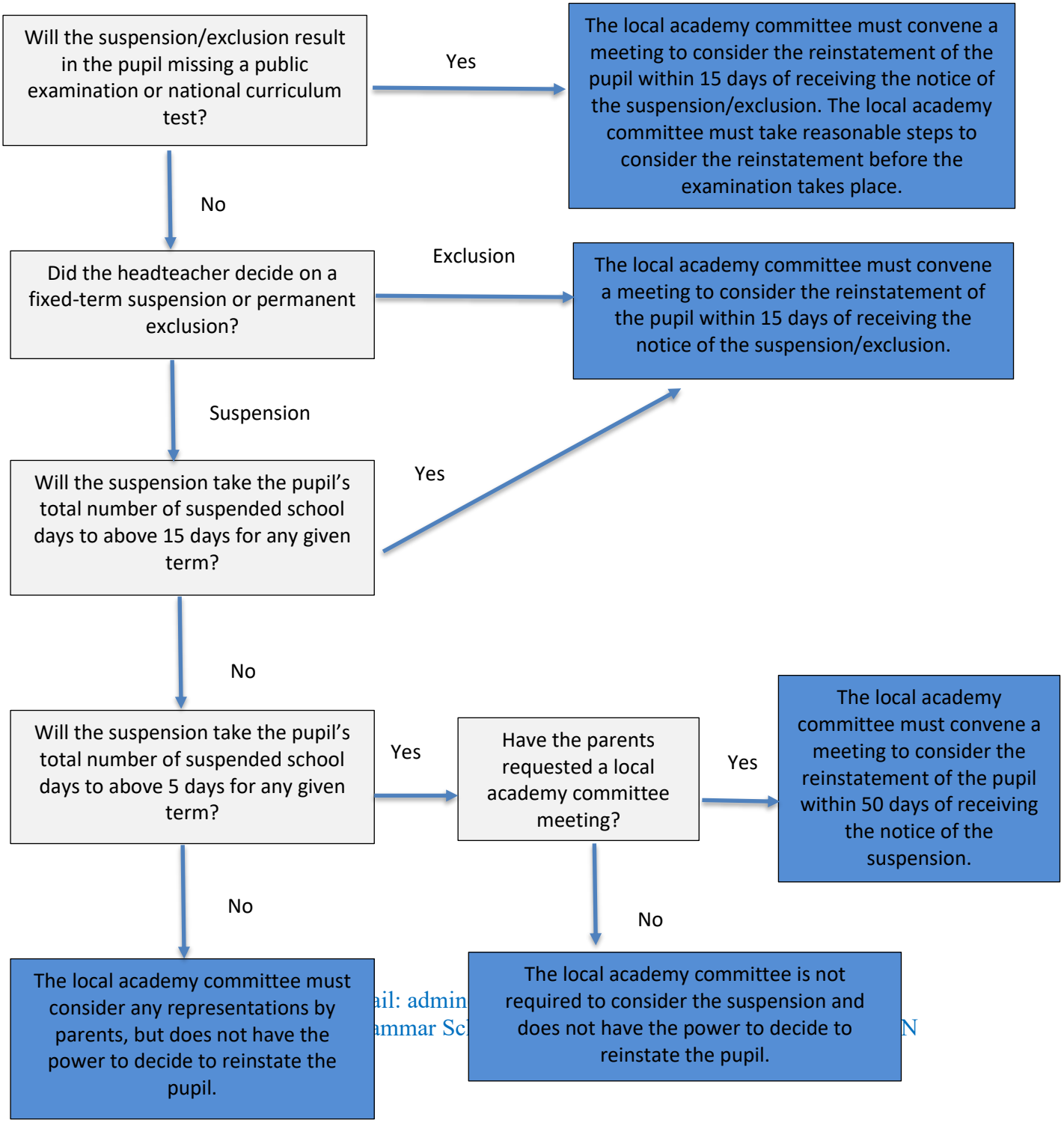
The Trust will use information gathered through quality assurance, governance, suspension and permanent exclusion data, complaints, learning reviews and school improvement activity to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and promote continuous improvement in inclusive practice across all academies.

28.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Flowchart for reviewing the headteacher's suspension or exclusion decision

Appendix A – Statutory Governance Process Following Suspension or Permanent Exclusion

Flow chart for reviewing the headteachers suspension or exclusion decision



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Appendix B – St Francis Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Decision Framework.

St Francis Suspension & Permanent Exclusion Decision Framework

for SEND and Vulnerable Children

Our aim is always inclusion, understanding and support.

Suspension or permanent exclusion is a last resort. It will only be used when all other reasonable strategies have been considered and the safety and wellbeing of the school community cannot be secured.

We are called to treat every person with dignity, compassion and respect, recognising the unique gifts and potential within each child.

1. CONCERN

A serious incident or pattern of behaviour raises concern.

Immediate actions

- Ensure the safety of all
- Record the incident
- Notify DSL if safeguarding concerns
- Communicate with parents/carers

Immediate risk?

If there is an immediate risk of serious harm, take proportionate action to make the situation safe (including fixed-term suspension if necessary) while continuing the process from Step 2.

2. UNDERSTAND

We take time to understand the child, their needs and the context before making decisions.

Explore and understand

- Pupil's voice – what have we heard?
- Barriers to learning or behaviour (use graduated response)
- SEND needs, reasonable adjustments
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Safeguarding / trauma / ACEs
- Family circumstances
- Views of staff, parents/carers and external professionals
- Impact on other pupils and staff

Key questions

- What has happened?
- Why might this have happened?
- What is this child telling us?
- What support is already in place?
- What reasonable adjustments are needed?
- Are there unmet needs we must address?

3. CONSIDER

We consider all support and alternative strategies before any decision to suspend or permanently exclude.

Consider and plan

- Implement or review graduated response
- Reasonable adjustments and adaptations
- Pastoral, SEMH and therapeutic support
- Restorative conversations and reparation
- Early help / targeted intervention
- Multi-agency support where appropriate
- Alternative provision, off-site direction or managed move (with consent)
- Risk assessment and safety planning

Can further support safely address the behaviour?

If **YES** – implement, review and monitor. Continue to work in partnership and return to Step 2 if concerns remain.

If **NO** – consider statutory powers.

4. DECIDE

A decision is made that is lawful, proportionate, equitable and in the best interests of the child and the wider school community.

Decision making checklist

- Have we exhausted reasonable adjustments and support?
- Is the decision lawful, proportionate and reasonable?
- Have we considered the Equality Act 2010 and SEND Code of Practice?
- Have we taken account of vulnerability and safeguarding?
- Is the decision in the best interests of the child and others?

Possible outcomes

- No further action – return to support plan
- Fixed-term suspension
- Permanent exclusion (as a last resort)
- Alternative provision / off-site direction
- Managed move (with consent)

5. REVIEW

Every decision is followed by careful review, reintegration planning and continuous learning.

Post-decision actions

- Communicate decision and rights clearly
- Arrange education from day 6 (if required)
- Plan for reintegration or transition
- Continue to meet needs and make adjustments
- Monitor, evaluate and adapt support

Ongoing review

Track progress, wellbeing and attendance. Learn from the incident to strengthen practice and reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

We believe every child can flourish. We will always work in partnership with children, families and professionals to remove barriers, build relationships and create the conditions for success.

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